

Text of the Red Cross Report on the Use of Poison Gas

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WASHINGTON, July 27—Following is the text of a report by André Rochat, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation to Yemen:

On May 11, 1967, the I.C.R.C. delegation in Jidda received appeals for assistance from the two villages of Gadafa and Gahar in the Wadi Heran, in the southwestern Jauf. According to these appeals a proportion of the inhabitants of these villages had been poisoned by gas dropped from raiding airplanes.

Some hours later this news was confirmed by representatives of the Yemeni Royalists and by the Saudi Arabian authorities, who requested the I.C.R.C. delegation to go immediately to the assistance of the victims.

The head of the delegation decided to proceed immediately to the scene, accompanied by another delegate, two doctors and a male nurse; members of the I.C.R.C. medical team, and a Yemeni escort. The two-lorry convoy, loaded with food and medical supplies, left Amara on May 13, after having given due notice of its line of march

and time-table to the Egyptian authorities.

Unfortunately, following an air attack on the I.C.R.C. convoy, it was not until the night of May 15-16 that the mission reached Gahar. This village is situated atop a hill some 500 feet in height. All the houses are clustered closely together, giving the appearance of a small fortress.

Account of Survivors

According to the inhabitants, 75 people were gassed during a raid in the early hours of May 10, 1967.

The account given by the survivors is as follows:

The bombers circled the village for some time then dropped three bombs on the hillside, east of and below the village, two or three hundreds yards away to windward (wind direction from east to west).

No houses were damaged. The explosions were relatively mild. The bomb craters were about eight feet in diameter and 20 inches deep, smaller than the usual craters.

Twenty minutes after dropping the three gas bombs, the planes dropped

four or five high-explosive bombs on the village and the western flank of the hill. Only one of these bombs caused any damage; this was sustained by a house in the center of the village.

Many animals, including almost 200 cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and numerous birds, were also killed. The villagers, who were not contaminated, buried the dead animals in a large pit west of the village, whilst the 75 humans killed were buried in four large communal graves.

Report of Observations

The I.C.R.C. delegates, for their part, observed the following:

They inspected the village for several hours, checking, whenever possible, the accuracy of the information mentioned above.

The doctors examined the four surviving gas casualties. Their medical report is attached hereto.

The head of the mission had one of the four communal graves opened. There were 15 corpses in it. An immediate autopsy by Dr. Brutschin and Dr. Janin left

no doubt that death was due to pulmonary edema (see attached medical report and photograph).

The 75 gas casualties were either within range of the gas when it was released or were in its path as it was blown by the wind. Some of the victims were found dead in their homes, as if they had died in their sleep.

Other inhabitants, working in the fields or watching over the livestock, were eastward of the area where the gas bombs fell, some of them very near to the spot, and none of them were affected.

The four survivors who were in the contaminated

area are all in pain from their eyes and almost blind. All have pains in the chest and none has any wound.

The doctors cannot testify to an air raid with gas bombs of which they were not personally witness. On the other hand, they stress that all the evidence leads to the conclusion that edema was caused by the breathing of poison gas.

The delegates were later informed that on May 17 and 18 the villages of Gabas, Nafal, Gadr and, for the second time, Gadafa were raided with gas bombs and that as a result 243 persons were killed.